

Ascent

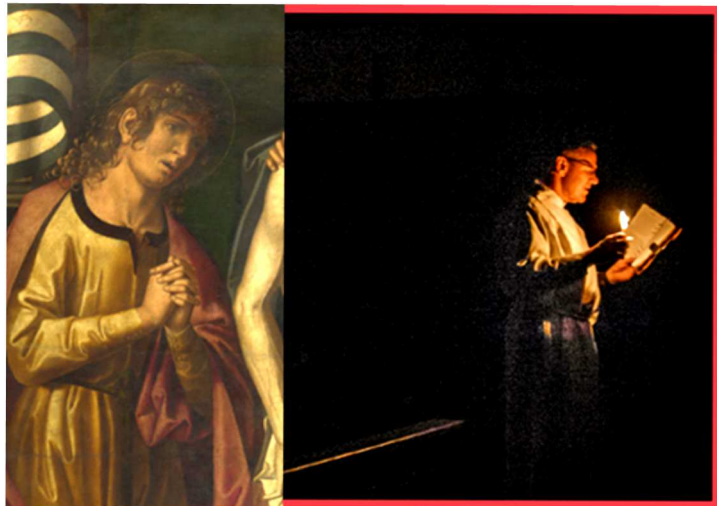
2019
April



PALM SUNDAY

April 14 at 9am or 11am

Both of our services will feature the Liturgy of the Palms, a Festival Procession and a dramatic reading of the Passion narrative.



MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 18 at 7pm

The worship of Maundy Thursday is rich in symbolism and will include washing of feet and the dramatic stripping of the altar in preparation for Good Friday. The service concludes in total darkness.



GOOD FRIDAY VIGIL

April 19 from Noon – 3pm

Because these are the hours Jesus hung on the cross, we encourage worshippers to keep vigil for the entire three-hour period, but the service will easily allow people to spend any one hour (Noon, 1pm or 2pm) without loss of continuity.

Sacramental Confession

Monday, April 15 - Wednesday, April 17 by appointment

In the Anglican tradition, there is no requirement for private confession. However, James 5:16 reads, “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for one other so that you may be healed.” If you desire to have your conscience unburdened and to receive spiritual consolation and ease of mind, you are invited to receive reconciliation with God through the aid of a priest. Jonathan Millard, Jonathan Warren, Andrea Millard and Tish Warren will be available by appointment these three days during Holy Week to hear your private confession. Please call or email one of the priests or call the church office in confidence (ext. 219).

CELEBRATE EASTER SUNDAY!



Great Vigil of Easter at 6am

The first service of Easter Day begins with darkness and includes the singing of the *Exsultet*, or Song of Praise, over the year's Easter Candle, the passing of the Light of Easter, scripture, silence and Holy Baptism. Please remember to bring your bells to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord! Childcare is not provided at the Vigil.

Easter Sunrise Breakfast

All who come to the Vigil are welcome in the Parish Hall for a special Easter Sunrise Breakfast. The suggested donation per person is \$5 with a family cap of \$20.

9am and 11am Services

Our 9am and 11am worship will be much the same, but with songs, hymns and anthems to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord on Easter Day! Please remember to bring your bells!

**Childcare details for all Holy Week and Easter Services can be found in the Children's Ministry article.*

Easter Lily Memorials—order by April 15

It is tradition at Ascension to have Easter lily memorials and thanksgivings on Easter Sunday. If you would like to contribute or find out more, please contact Melita Carter at cartermo@gmail.com or 412-736-3540 by Monday, April 15. Donations of any amount are welcome. Memorials to loved ones will be listed in our Easter bulletins.

The Liturgy of Holy Week & Easter

Holy Week and Easter mark the high point of our church year as we observe and celebrate the most significant events of our Lord Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection. For those new to Ascension and perhaps new to Anglicanism, there are several practices during Holy Week that we want to introduce you to: Washing of Feet, the Veneration of the Cross, and the Vigil on Easter Sunday.

Holy Week: A Weeklong Prayer Vigil by the Rev. Canon Dr. Andrea Millard, Director of Prayer Ministry



Andrea sets the context by showing us how our Prayer Book links all the services of Holy Week together.



Holy Week is the last week of Lent. It commemorates the last days of Jesus' life on earth, focusing on his "Passover" from death to life. Think of it as a weeklong prayer vigil wherein the church gathers to remember God's plan of salvation. It's one vigil that happens over multiple days.

The following recap of our Holy Week prayer gatherings is adapted from the new *Anglican Church in North America 2019 Book of Common Prayer*, to be released in June. Each is from the "Concerning the Service" section of each liturgy:

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday begins with the blessing of palms and a reading of the Triumphal Entry Gospel. The purpose of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem was to fulfill his Father's will; thus it is fitting that this service continues with the reading of the Passion Gospel in which the whole story of the week is anticipated. The emphasis of the liturgy turns to the days that lie ahead in Holy Week. We who hail Jesus as king one moment, may in the next deny him, even joining with the crowd in shouting, "Crucify him!"

The Triduum (The Sacred Three Days)

The Paschal mystery—the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—is at the heart of the Christian Gospel. The evening of Maundy Thursday begins the Triduum (the sacred three days). This service, together with Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and The Great Vigil of Easter, form a single liturgy; thus, the final blessing and dismissal is reserved for the conclusion of the Great Vigil.

Maundy Thursday receives its name from the *mandatum* (commandment) given by our Lord: "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another*" (John 13:34). At the Last Supper, Jesus washed his disciples' feet and commanded them to love and serve one another as he had done.

This day commemorates the Lord's example of servant ministry, the institution of the Eucharist, the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the betrayal leading to the crucifixion.

The Good Friday liturgy is the second part of the Triduum (the sacred three days). This most somber of all days is appropriately marked by fasting, abstinence, and penitence, leading us to focus on Jesus and the meaning of his cross. ... The faithful are reminded of the role which their own sin played in this suffering and agony, as Christ took all sin upon himself, in obedience to his Father's will. By the cross we are redeemed, set free from bondage to sin and death. The cross is a sign of God's never-ending love for us. It is a sign of life, in the midst of death.

The Great Vigil is the first liturgy of Easter Day. It is appropriate that the service begins in darkness. The liturgy normally consists of four parts:

The Service of Light: a new fire is kindled, and from it the Paschal Candle is lit, symbolizing Christ, the light of the world. The Exsultet, an ancient song of praise, is sung or said as the climax of this part of the liturgy.

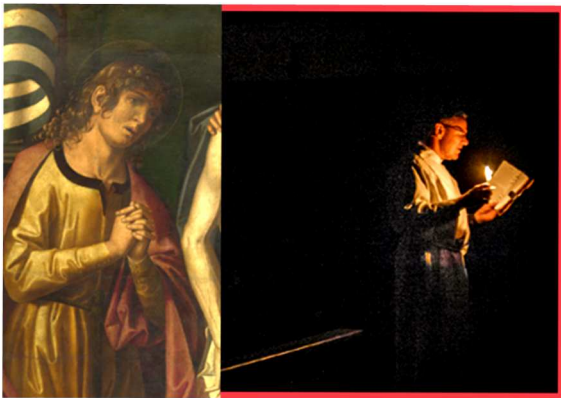
The Service of Lessons: key passages from Scripture recount the history of God's mighty acts and promises. These readings are accompanied by Psalms, Canticles, and prayers.

Holy Baptism is the sacrament through which candidates are united to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4), which the Church celebrates on this most holy night.

The Holy Eucharist is the proper culmination of the Easter Liturgy. As we keep this holy feast, we share the joy of our Savior's triumph and are strengthened by his grace to walk in newness of life.

Please join us at Church of the Ascension as we gather in prayer to remember the final week of Jesus' earthly ministry. To learn more about these days of prayer, check out the ACNA web page: http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/texts_for_common_prayer

Foot Washing on Maundy Thursday by the Rev. Tish Harrison Warren, Writer-in-Residence



*Tish reflects on the practice
of Foot Washing on
Maundy Thursday*



The night before Jesus died, at the beginning of his (now famous) last meal, Jesus does something utterly shocking and completely unpredictable.

He gets up and lays "aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, ties it around his waist. Then he pours water into a bowl and begins to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him" (John 13:4-5).

Footwashing, as you may know, was a fairly common practice at the time. People would wash their feet before eating to get off the hardened mud and animal dung that inevitably littered unpaved streets. But it was always a slave or a servant who washed people's feet. No one wanted this job.

Foot washing was considered so menial that even Jewish slaves were exempt from this task; it was reserved for gentile slaves, the lowest of low estate.

We have to enter the mindset of a society where one's place in the social order was set. There were those of low status and those of higher, and these categories weren't up for grabs. Then Jesus kneels and gets his hands wet and muddy, and in doing so, he takes this whole, entrenched social hierarchy and turns it on its head. He, the rabbi, the host, washes the feet of his disciples. There is no other example in this period of antiquity of anyone with higher status washing anyone beneath his or her status.

Jesus, who deserved all glory, who could have called down angels, who was in the "very nature" God, took here the form of the lowest servant and a slave. And he is not only washing those who are his friends, but indeed those who would betray him.

When Jesus does this, he is pointing to the cross, where he will take the ultimate place of humility. He is submitting himself to the place of a servant and he will submit himself ultimately to death.

I hope this story still shocks us. But for many of us, we've heard and read it so often that it has been frozen in ink. We don't see much foot washing these days, so this story can sometimes become a sentimental little morality tale - no longer scandalous or shocking.

But I hope this Holy Week we can let our imaginations run wild with this story again. Who, now, are those of lowest status? Who, now, would Jesus take the place of?

Would he be a man in a nice suit walking to the back kitchen of a restaurant to wash dishes? Would he rise from dinner and take his place among the day laborers lined up, trying to find someone to pay them under the table for a few hours of hard work? Would he begin changing diapers with single moms in government housing? Would he take the place of a mother and daughter waiting in detention at the Southern border?

This is the God we worship, one who knows what it's like to be considered a nobody, to be unwanted and unwelcomed, to feel pain, to be humiliated, and to breathe his last. He submitted himself and became obedient, even unto death. He identifies himself not with the powerful, but with the least and the lowly.

Jesus had every right to smite the disciples for their sin, to kill Judas and escape, but he did not take up his rights, he humbled himself and washed the feet of those who would deny even knowing him.

Why did he do this?

The scriptures tell us that, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and ...washed the disciples' feet... (John 13).

These are some of the most incongruous words in the scriptures. They say, in essence, "Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he was coming from God and going back to God, so he went and acted like a slave."

Jesus knew that he had all authority. He knew he was from God and going to God; he knew he was worthy of worship. And so, he shocked us from our stupor. He chose to bend down and get his hands dirty with the stuff of earth, with stinky, humiliating, broken humanity.

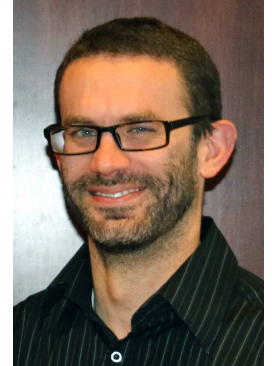
May we continue to be shocked by him.

Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday

by Chris Massa, Assistant Director of Music Ministry



*Chris reflects
on the practice of the
Veneration of the Cross which
happens at Ascension during
our Good Friday Vigil*



If you do a study of the word “worship” in the Bible, one of the first things you’ll discover is that it is about much more than music. Worshippers are exhorted to praise the Lord with harp, strings, and clanging cymbals (Ps. 105), but they are also commanded to worship him “in holy splendor” (Ps. 96:9) and “in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:23), and that is not even getting into the warnings against worshipping other gods, or the book of Revelation. When I look through the lens of scripture, I am forced to believe that a considerable disservice has been done to the biblical principle of worship. Worship is supposed to be something earth-shaking and paradigm-shifting; the Church has too often reduced it to a style of music.

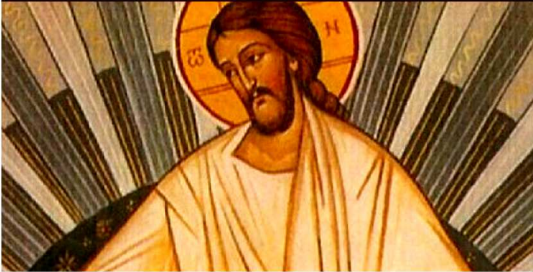
One of my favorite aspects of worship at Church of the Ascension, and of Anglican worship in general, is how multi-sensory it is. Yes, we worship through singing, but we also worship by standing and kneeling, by smelling the incense, by drinking the wine. And if you ask me, it makes perfect sense that we should do this. After all, our bodies were created by God and proclaimed to be “very good” (Gen. 1:31), so it is only logical that our bodily senses could (and should) be used in the service of worshipping him.

On Good Friday, we will be given an opportunity to worship God in a way that is extremely, maybe even uncomfortably, physical. A large wooden cross will be carried into the nave, and it will look like the person carrying it is struggling, because they will be. Then it will be stood up, front and center, and you will hear it hit the floor; you may even feel it. Then, you will be invited — not forced or coerced, but invited — to approach it. There will be a basket at its base if you want to leave something — maybe a prayer, a sin, or an addiction — at the foot of the cross, but you can also just bring yourself. And then... well, what you do then is up to you. Maybe you will want to kneel, or maybe you will just weep. Some even kiss the cross. But at the very least, I would recommend that you touch it. I know that might sound odd, but it is worth engaging your sense of touch and feeling the grain of the wood under your fingers. It is worth reminding ourselves that the cross on which our Savior died was not an abstraction or a concept, but a real thing, made of real wood, and you may find touching the cross to be a powerful way of doing this.

Let us be very clear on one thing: The invitation is not to worship the cross. The cross is not and cannot be an idol. It is not the cross that is worthy of our worship, but the Lamb who hung on it. And yet, just as a song or an icon can direct our attention to God, so the presence of a physical cross can bring the crucifixion of Jesus into stark relief, out of the pages of scripture and into our hearts and minds. To quote one of my favorite hymns, “*Come, let us stand beneath the cross, so may the blood from out his side fall gently on us drop by drop; Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.*” The Veneration of the Cross is just that: an invitation to approach the cross and consider the One who bled, suffered, and died for you, for me, and for the world. It is, in other words, an invitation to worship Jesus.

The Great Vigil of Easter

by Dr. Jeanne Kohn, Director of Music Ministry



Jeanne concludes our articles with a reflection on the Easter Vigil



*“I got me flowers to straw Thy way; I got me boughs off many a tree:
But Thou wast up by break of day, and brought'st Thy sweets along with Thee....”*

So writes George Herbert in his 17th century poem “Easter”, and so have I long thought that *that* is what it is like to journey toward our church in the cold darkness of pre-dawn on Easter morning, looking forward to the Easter Vigil worship. Like the women who journeyed to the tomb on that first Easter morning, longing to do something for Jesus, we find, as we arrive, that he is there before us, greeting us with his deep love and empowering us to worship him.

The Easter Vigil service is probably the most ancient of the services celebrated during Holy Week – traces of it are found as early as the 2nd century. While many churches celebrate it on Saturday night, others, like Ascension, have a tradition of holding their Vigil services beginning before sunrise. Just as all of Lent has been a journey from ashes to alleluias, so is the Easter Vigil a mini-journey from tomb to garden, from darkness to light, from the Fall to the Resurrection and new life through baptism. It is also a “short watch”: in the Maundy Thursday gospel, read in a darkened church, we heard Jesus ask his disciples “could you not watch with me one hour?” – and so now we keep Vigil, sitting in the darkness, waiting for the lighting of the Easter Candle, waiting for the dawn, waiting for the first Eucharist of Easter.

We arrive in a very dimly lit, almost dark church and sit for a bit in the darkness, remembering the darkness we encountered on Maundy Thursday when all light was extinguished in a bare, stripped down room. And then the Easter Candle is lit at the back of the church! Amazing how the single light – representing the light of Christ, can bring light into a dark place! As the procession moves slowly down the aisle to the front, the Celebrant chants “The Light of Christ” and we respond “Thanks be to God” and what I call “the dance of light” begins as torch bearers light the candles of the congregation, crisscrossing back and forth, revealing more and more of Christ’s Body as the candle light fills the room.

When the procession arrives at the front the Celebrant sings one of the Church’s most ancient chants, the *Exsultet*, originating possibly as early as the 5th century. With glorious poetry, it speaks of the “holiness of this night” when earth and heaven are joined and we are reconciled to God – when, to redeem a slave, God gave a son.

From this singing we move into hearing the story of our Redemption with various readings from the Old Testament. And we sing songs in the darkness and pray short prayers, and while all this is happening the sun is rising, ever so slowly filling the room with God’s light.

Baptisms are performed and we all renew our baptismal vows – and then there is a hush in the candle-lit darkness ‘till the celebrant cries “Alleluia! Christ is risen” and as we shout “The Lord is risen indeed” all the lights in the church come on and bells are rung and we sing our way into the first Eucharist of Easter.

Psalm 30 ends thus: “*You have turned my wailing into dancing; you have put off my sack-cloth and clothed me with joy. Therefore, my heart sings to you without ceasing; O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever.*” I look forward to worshipping with you at the dawning of Easter as we put off the sack-cloth of our Lenten journey and enter joyfully into adoration of our Risen King!

Ministry Openings: Can You Help?

Help to support your church family

Are you newish to Ascension? Perhaps a new member? Want to get a bit more involved? Several of our ministries need additional support. Serving on Sundays or during the week is a great way to support our church family. If you would like to test drive one of these ministries, please email marilyn.chislaghi@ascensionpittsburgh.org or the person specified for each ministry.

If you aren't sure where your interests lie or what your area of giftedness is, mark your calendar for **Wednesday, May 22nd from 6:30 – 8:30pm**

As part of our *Explore Anglicanism* series, Jonathan Warren will host a class entitled ***The Local Church and You.***

This class will examine Ascension's Ethos, Ministries, Community Groups and offer participants a Spiritual Gifts Inventory. Once the inventory is complete, the results may be discussed with Jonathan Warren (Associate Rector), Marilyn Chislaghi (Director of Ministry), or any member of Ascension clergy and staff. Please look through the examples of ministry opportunities listed here that are in need of volunteers.

9am and 11am Greeters

We have greeters at two of our main entrances on Sunday mornings prior to the start of both services. We have need for more greeters prior to both services. You can serve on your own, with another individual or whole family groups can serve together. The task is easy – offer a smile or a handshake, open the door, and say 'Hi' to folks on Sunday mornings. If people are new, a few instructions on where rooms and activities (i.e. childcare) are located may be helpful. You serve one month per quarter before one of our services.

9am and 11am Ushers

Ushers serve on a team, one month per quarter. Each team has a captain who trains and leads the group Sunday mornings. Parents and children can serve together. It's a great job for middle schoolers and their parents!

9am and 11am Welcome Table Hosts

Each Sunday we invite newcomers to check in at our welcome table and collect a gift. This is a critical ministry and we need a few more people willing to chat with newcomers after services, get to know them, and answer any questions they have. It's about a 15-minute commitment. You serve one month per quarter after one of our services. If we have enough people, you'll have a partner at the table with you. The great thing about this ministry is the availability of chocolate when needed.

Hospitality Hour Hosts

Remember how awkward it is when you were new at Ascension or when you visited another church? Many of our newcomers join us for our hospitality hour in the parish hall between services. We are recruiting hospitality hour hosts to be aware of those who appear to be first-timers or relatively new. The idea is simply to strike up a friendly conversation and get to know them a bit, helping them feel more comfortable. You serve one week per month (i.e. 1st Sunday of the month).

Altar Ministry

We have three terrific teams that work one month per quarter to prepare the Nave for worship. On a typical week it takes 8 'person hours' to get ready for a Sunday service and 2 'person hours' to clean up. So, the more people, the easier the job. Ideally, we like 8 people on each team, taking turns at set up and clean up. It's also fun as camaraderie and friendship develops on teams. Some of the work takes place Saturday morning (but this can be flexible), and some of the work takes place between and after services on Sunday. Altar Ministry is open to men and women, older and younger. Again, this is a great parent/child ministry to participate in together. Internationals welcome!

Chalice Bearers and Lay Readers

Because this is a liturgical ministry of the church, it is reserved for members only. We need more people to read and bear chalice at both the 9am and 11am services.

Pew Rack Organizers

Do you attend our OWLS Senior Ministry and could you stay after the program for an extra 30-45 mins? Do you work in Oakland and could you spare 30-45 mins once a month? Over the years we have been blessed by volunteers who come in

and reorganize the books in the pew racks. We are in need of more of these wonderful behind-the-scenes servants. For information or to volunteer for this ministry, please contact stacey.regan@ascensionpittsburgh.org.

4th Tuesday Evening Shelter Meal

Ascension serves a meal at the EECM shelter in East Liberty on the 4th Tuesdays of the month. We recently had a retirement of someone who served the shelter meal for many years. We could use a couple of extra hands to help things run smoothly. All the details needed to participate will be provided. A small team typically serves together.

OWLS: Seniors Ministry

Thursday, April 11 from 12:30 – 2:30pm

Golf buddies and long-time friends, Alan Komm and Tom Hillman, will share insights and personal stories of their lives in Christ. And, there is guaranteed to be some humor in these stories! As we approach Holy Week and Easter, Tom and Alan's reflections will demonstrate how developing a deeper relationship with the risen Christ will bring joy and change in our lives.



Join us from 12:30 -2:30pm for a delicious lunch. OWLS meetings take place on the second Thursday of each month. (Parking restrictions will be lifted for people to park on the streets and the Neville Street lot will be reserved for OWLS only.) There is a \$10 charge for lunch, but first-time friends are free! Please RSVP to Ann Tefft at 412-526-1107 or tefft.ann@gmail.com.

Special Needs Ministry



Sunday Morning WINGS Class

We need another teacher as well as more 'buddies' for our Sunday morning class for special needs teens and adults. WINGS runs concurrent with the 9am service. Teachers serve on a rotation, approximately one week out of every 4 or 5. If you want to talk more about this opportunity to serve, please contact Keira Fuener (email below).

Capernaum Friends Club : Saturday, April 13 at 2pm

Our next Capernaum Friends Club meeting is Saturday, April 13th from 2 – 4pm. Anyone is welcome to join us, even if you are just curious about what we do. If you know a family with a special needs teen or young adult, please let them know about us! Our doors are open wide! For more information, please reach out to Keira at keirafuener@gmail.com.

Carlucci Memorial Fund

We are grateful to all who gave so generously in loving memory of the former director of this ministry, Christina Carlucci, who passed away suddenly in January. Over \$8,500 was given to the memorial fund in her name, a testament to the love so many have for her and her family. Thank you. If you still wish to give a memorial gift, checks are payable to Church of the Ascension with 'Carlucci memorial' on the memo line. Please continue to keep her husband, Jim, as well as their children, Ben, Emily and Sam, in prayer.

A Marriage Enrichment Class



Marriage is hard and we need each other. This course, which will run for 7 weeks, is an opportunity to press into the challenges of our marriages together, and grow in learning how to love well.

Designed by Milan and Kay Yerkovich, *How We Love* looks at marital patterns through the lens of a theory that suggests that our relational styles are formed (for good or for ill) through our early life experiences. This course looks at how these styles impact our marriages, and offers insights and practices to help shift unhealthy patterns and grow in intimacy.

As the Yerkovich's put it: "For 14 years, our marriage was stuck in the same old frustrating patterns. When we looked at our first lessons in love from our families, we immediately recognized the unseen forces governing how we loved. For the first time, we understood the source of our frustrations and why we were stuck. Deep change was possible at last. The insight we offer comes from making many mistakes, and years of praying for wisdom. Our prayer is that soon you will discover what we have—the relief that comes from resolution, deep understanding and comfort."

-Milan and Kay Yerkovich



Course facilitators:
Jim and Mari Stout

Course dates:
7 Friday evenings
from April 26 through June 7

Time: 6:30 to 9pm

Childcare: Childcare will be provided for Infants through 5th grade; we hope to organize supervised gatherings for youth as well

Questions? Feel free to contact Mari: mac-stout@gmail.com or Jim: jmstouts@gmail.com

Registration: Please sign up by March 31st at www.ascensionpittsburgh.org.

Course Fee:
\$100 per couple to cover the cost of the course materials (checks payable to Church of the Ascension with 'How we Love' on the memo line)

Due to the nature of the material, this course will be limited to 20 couples, on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Financial Peace University

Ascension will offer Financial Peace University (FPU) beginning this May. FPU is a course that provides tremendous help and guidance with household finances. Those who have taken the course have come to understand budgeting, saving, insurance, mortgages, retirement, college planning, investing, giving and other practical financial matters with excellent results. Some members of our own congregation have dug out of significant and debilitating debt by practicing the principles taught in the course.



Course facilitators: Kelsey and Aaron Sams



Course dates: 7 Friday evenings from April 26 through June 7.

Time: 6:30 to 9pm

Childcare: Childcare will be provided for Infants through 5th grade; we hope to have supervised gatherings for the youth also

Questions? Feel free to contact
Aaron at chemicalsams@gmail.com or Kelsey at kelseysams@gmail.com.

Registration: Please sign up by March 31st at www.ascensionpittsburgh.org.

Course Fee: \$100 to cover the cost of the course kit (one kit needed per household). Checks are payable to Church of the Ascension with 'FPU' on the memo line.

Ascension International Ministry

Here is a taste of the activities and interactions internationals have with members and friends of Ascension ...

These are some of the **questions** asked by internationals over the past month:

- What if I do not have health insurance?
- How do I find a lawyer?
- How do I meet Americans?
- How can I learn more about baptism?

Many seeds have been planted since Christmas-time with internationals.

Thanks for all of you who have served and are serving in some way.

We ask for prayer for the seeds sown and a harvest in this ministry.



LuAnn Pengidore:

PittsburghEnglish4U@gmail.com



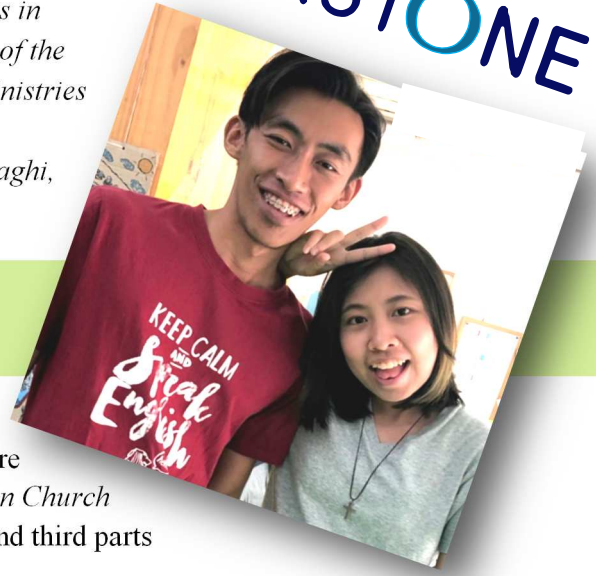
- Many international students regularly read and discuss Jesus' parables in Timmy Podnar's Bible study following her Monday morning class.
- Another large group of internationals meets each week at Jim and Barb Franzen's house to read through the book of Mark and discuss it.
 - An international couple met with missionaries Frank and Anne several hours to ask questions about the Christian faith and will attend a study on Thursday night.
 - A couple of students have been regularly working through a Navigator's discipleship book with David Van Every and LuAnn Pengidore.
 - One student has been learning about Confirmation through Robin Capcara's class on Sunday mornings and meeting with Lu Ann for follow-up.
 - A twelve-year old international will meet with Jonathan Millard to learn more about baptism this month.
 - A small group is watching a video and discussing Christianity each week with Donna Wilkes and Kirk Wadsack from Trinity School for Ministry
 - A Chinese student met several times with Jonathan Warren before returning to China.
 - A young mom has been meeting regularly with Meg Sateia for fellowship.
 - An Italian student is meeting regularly with Tiziana Rankin for conversation practice.
 - Two students have met with Joan Anson for career planning and resume writing.
 - An advanced class learned about the services of the East Liberty Family Health Care Center from Dr. Sima Weaver.
- Each month, several students join Jonathan Sewell in cooking a meal for or serving the homeless.

Thailand Partnership

Campus Ministry in Bangkok

Ascension hopes to grow a deep partnership with our brothers and sisters in the Anglican Church in Thailand, and with that in mind, over the course of the next few months introductions will be made to many of the people and ministries that our team had the opportunity to visit this past January. Members of Ascension's team that visited Thailand in January include Marilyn Chislaghi, Denise Cox, Andrea and Jonathan Millard, and Joel Scandrett.

Student Centre
CORNERSTONE



Ascension's Thailand team was privileged to visit Cornerstone Student Centre in Bangkok this past January. The development of a Student Centre was the first part of a three-part strategy to develop *Lat Krabang Anglican Church* which is located in the airport district of Bangkok (More on the second and third parts of the strategy in articles to come!)

Cornerstone Student Centre occupies four floors of a narrow 'shophouse' in the student housing area of a bustling technical institute. The main floor of the Centre provides a common area for students to come and socialize, to attend English classes and workshops, to play games, sleep on comfy sofas, or to engage in cross cultural exchanges with English-speaking volunteers from countries like Canada, the US, New Zealand and Singapore. The upper floors of the Centre provide housing for students and campus ministry volunteers. The most important work of the Centre is to facilitate opportunities for the campus ministry team to share about God's love through friendship evangelism. From 2012 through mid-2016, approximately 850 students registered for English Conversation Courses and several became 'regulars' who hung out at the Centre.



As a highlight each year, Cornerstone Student Centre organizes 10-day English Immersion Camps for Thai students at St. James' Church in the country of Singapore. The camps have had a huge impact on Thai students - they are not only immersed in an English environment, but are also immersed within a distinctively Christian environment. Several students have come to know Christ as their savior as a result.

Cornerstone continually seeks volunteers from overseas to help staff the Student Centre, to teach English classes, and to engage with students. The physical setup of the Centre with accommodation provided in the upper floors makes adjustment and living relatively easy for volunteers. One of the avenues Ascension may pursue as we deepen our Thailand Partnership is to engage in discussions with the Coalition for Christian Outreach to see if "CCO Bangkok" might be a dream we could pursue together. The pictures of the Centre include two students, a brother and sister, who came to know Christ through this ministry and now volunteer regularly. Like any good campus ministry, there are always snacks. *However, Thai snacks, specifically Salted Egg Fish Skin Crunchy Crisps, took a bit of getting used to! Joel's expression says it all!*

Missions: The Kornfields

You may see Ascension missionaries Dave and Debbie Kornfield worshipping with us when they are not traveling, but behind the scenes they are caring for and training pastors in eleven countries, with more doors opening. Dave visits **Pastoring of Pastors** leaders in most of these eleven countries two or three times each year, and mentors them by Skype when he's home in Pittsburgh.

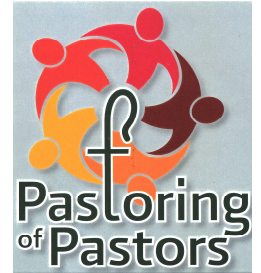


Dave and Debbie Kornfield

Prayer suggestions for April:

Week 1:

Pray for the leaders of the Latin American veteran **Pastoring of Pastors** countries as they “adopt” new countries: Otto, Freddy, and Hector in suffering Venezuela, adopting the Dominican Republic; Munir, Juan, and Bill in Bolivia, helping with Ecuador; Adriana, Phil, Juan Carlos and Nidia in Colombia, adopting Peru; and Pedro and Mirian in Paraguay, adopting Argentina. Please pray that God will provide for Mexico, which does not yet have “parents” other than Dave. Pray especially for Munir and for Adriana, both with significant personal needs, and for the desperate situation in Venezuela.



Week 2:

Dave and Debbie will be attending mission meetings in California this week. Thank God for the publication of the complete *Discipleship Bible*, a seven-year project for Dave, in Brazil this month. It will be launched at two major events, an “Intentional Disciple-Making Churches” conference May 3-5, and an annual pastors’ retreat May 6-10 of over a thousand pastors and leaders, at which both Dave and Debbie will be speaking.

Week 3:

Pray for Dave’s work as leader of the Pastoring of Pastors Task force for the World Evangelical Alliance. The mandate he was given by the WEA is to encourage the Pastoring of Pastors ministry in each of the WEA’s 129 member countries. Pray that God will guide him to key leaders with passion for this ministry, especially at the WEA General Assembly in Indonesia in November.

Week 4:

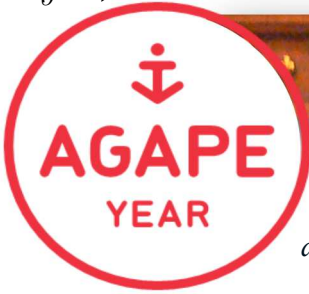
Pray for God to open doors for Pastoring of Pastors in Africa, calling leaders to this work who understand the challenges and cultures of that continent. Pastoring of Pastors is functioning in Ghana (led by Paul), Burkina Faso (John), and Cameroon (Honoré). Dave has invitations to Kenya and Angola in September. He hopes these countries will be adopted by Brazil, as Angola is Portuguese-speaking. Please pray that Nigeria can become a place for Dave to bring West African leaders together. Pray for God’s protection of his people in the midst of intense violence shutting down missionary activity and harming churches in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Nigeria.



To receive the Kornfields’ monthly newsletter, sign up on www.onechallenge.org. Click Pray, and under Stay Connected on the right, enter your email, then follow the prompts. To receive Dave’s intercessors’ updates, let him know at davidkornfield@gmail.com. To receive Debbie’s updates about Venezuela, let her know at debrakornfield@gmail.com.

SPECIAL INVITATION: Sunday, April 28 join Dave and Debbie for lunch in the Hunt Rooms after the 11am service with a hygiene product to contribute to needy pastors in Venezuela. They will tell you stories from this last year before zipping to the airport for their flight to Brazil!





REMEMBRANCE OF ME

“And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” Luke 22:19

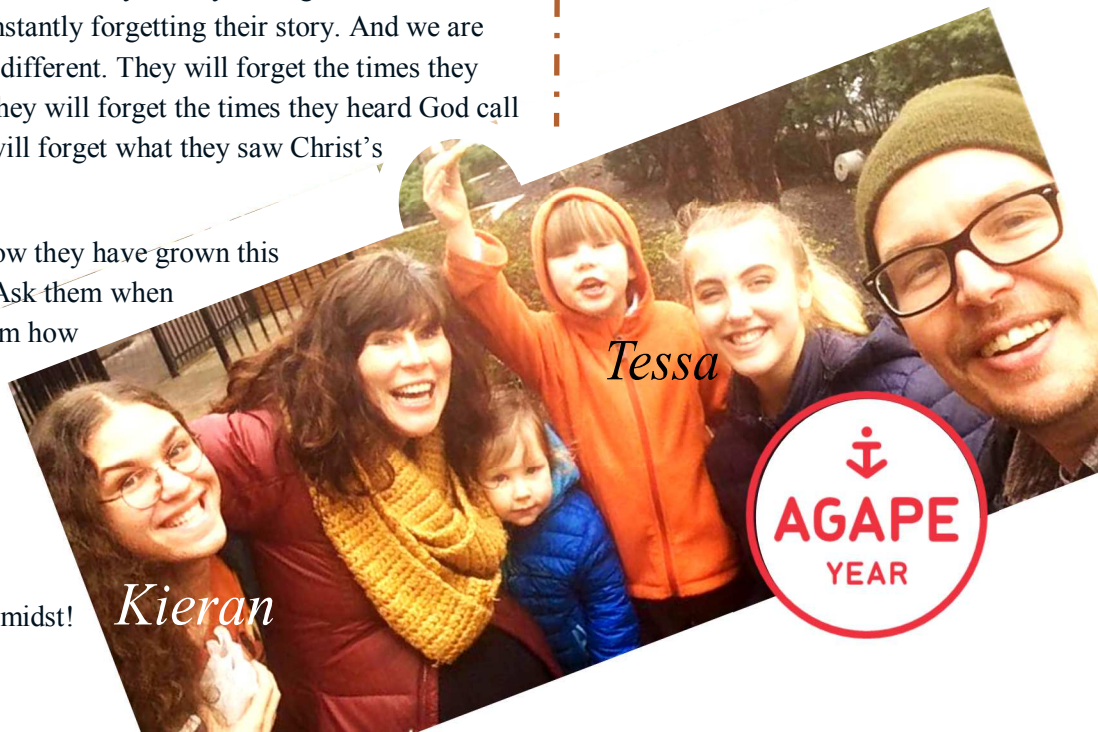
As we sat in the pews of Restoration Anglican in Arlington, VA and heard these familiar words “do this in remembrance of me” weave their way through the sermon, the priest called to our attention one of our chief characteristics as God’s people: We are forgetful. As we look through the story of Scripture, we are a forgetful people who doubt God’s love in the garden, question his deliverance in the desert, worship false gods in a promised land, and deny our allegiance to Him at the Cross. And so, in His last meal with the disciples, it makes sense that Jesus implores his friends to remember. Remember who they are and whose they are. Remember.

For the month of March, our Agape Year fellows were on the road visiting their home parishes and other churches in various areas throughout the country. They are sharing the story of what God has done in their lives and bearing witness to the story He is writing through His church in all of its various and unique contexts. But mostly our hope is that they are becoming a ‘remembering’ people. Without the telling and retelling of our stories, we too quickly forget the mighty works of God in our corporate identity and our individual stories. We told our Fellows a truth that they didn’t want to hear: our time sharing with churches is 10% for the hearers but 90% for the teller.

Nobody likes hearing that they are forgetful. Nobody likes hearing that they will someday soon forget the things that they have seen God do in their life and in the lives of others. Nobody likes hearing that they will forget the words that God has spoken to them.

But as people of the Book, we have a rich family history of forgetfulness. We see in scripture that God’s people are constantly forgetting their story. And we are no different. And our Fellows are no different. They will forget the times they met Christ in the homeless shelter. They will forget the times they heard God call to them in our times of study. They will forget what they saw Christ’s body doing in Thailand.

So, ask them their story. Ask them how they have grown this year. Ask them what has been hard. Ask them when they laughed uncontrollably. Ask them how they came to know Jesus better through their time in Pittsburgh. Kieran and Tessa will return to their homes in Florida and Massachusetts in early May. Ask them this month while they are still worshipping and ministering in your midst!



Opportunities to serve alongside Agape Year:

On Saturday, April 6th.



OPEN HAND
ministries

We will join Open Hand Ministries for their First Saturday work day. This is an amazing opportunity for you, your family, or your small group to join in the work that Open Hand is doing in Pittsburgh’s East End.

Tuesday afternoons ...

April 2 and April 9

Eat lunch and study God’s word with the homeless and unemployed on Pittsburgh’s Northside most Tuesday afternoons.

Come join us from 11:30-1pm:

Tuesday, April 2nd or


Tuesday, April 9th

Contact Nathan Twichell with any questions about either opportunity at 724-787-7586 or natetwichell@hotmail.com.



Young Adult Ministry

A goal of our young adult ministry at Ascension is to encourage young adults so that we can faithfully live out our lives as Christians. One of the ways we do this is through a monthly gathering called Dinner & Compline where we eat, pray, listen, and sing together. Join us for our April gathering on Thursday the 4th from 6:30-8:30pm in the Ascension Hunt Rooms. Great speaker! Great food! Great friendships!

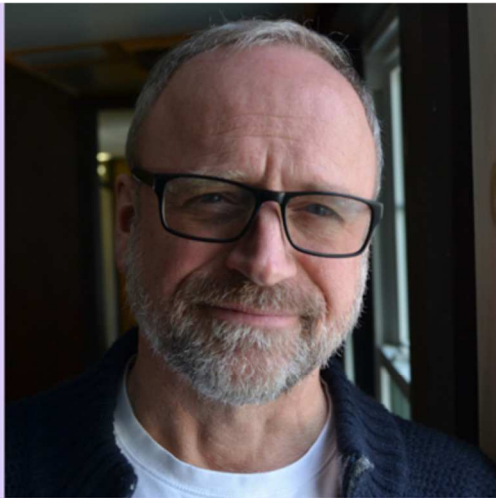



CHURCH OF THE
ASCENSION

DINNER
AND
COMPLINE

Thursday
April 4th

6:30-8:30pm

GREEK WITH
JACK GABIG

VENITE: Ascension Campus Ministry

Meet Bethany!

Bethany is a sophomore at the University of Pittsburgh where she is studying Supply Chain Management at the School of Business with a minor in Music. She is from the North Hills of Pittsburgh, specifically Ohio Township where she attended Avonworth High School.



We had the chance to ask Bethany a few questions about her experience at Ascension and what it's like being a Christian on a secular campus.

Q: How did you find Ascension?

Bethany:

I found Ascension through the Maddalena family. I babysat for them throughout my senior year of high school. When I graduated and moved to Pitt they invited me to the Ascension picnic and combined church service at the beginning of the school year.

Q: What has your involvement at Ascension consisted of?

Bethany:

At that first service in August I filled out the infamous yellow paper in the bulletin which is how Jeanne Kohn found me! I happened to put down that I liked singing and choir, and I

suddenly (and happily) found myself a member of Ascension's choir. While that has been my primary involvement, I am trying to meet more people in the college ministry.

Q: What is your experience being a Christian college student at Pitt like?

Bethany: I'll admit, being a Christian at Pitt is hard. My faith has wavered, but God has certainly been watching out for me and blessed me with good friends. My friends aren't professing Christians, but they have similar morals as me. Although my friends are supportive of me being a Christian, they haven't pushed me to grow in my relationship with God. I have hit pretty close to rock bottom where God has graciously found me and begun to lift me out and hopefully into a better relationship with Him. I desire to have more Christian friends, which

has been something I have somewhat struggled with at Pitt. I also sometimes get shy about my faith because Pitt is so liberal, but I'm praying to be a better witness for God!

Q: How has Ascension been a blessing to you throughout your time in college thus far?

Bethany:

Ascension has helped me through the different ministries it offers such as the prayer ministry. Additionally, all the people I have encountered at Ascension are so loving and welcoming, which alone has been a blessing; people feed me, give me rides, offer a listening ear, and share wisdom. I can't be thankful enough.

Q: How can the congregation be praying for you as you finish the semester and get ready for this summer?

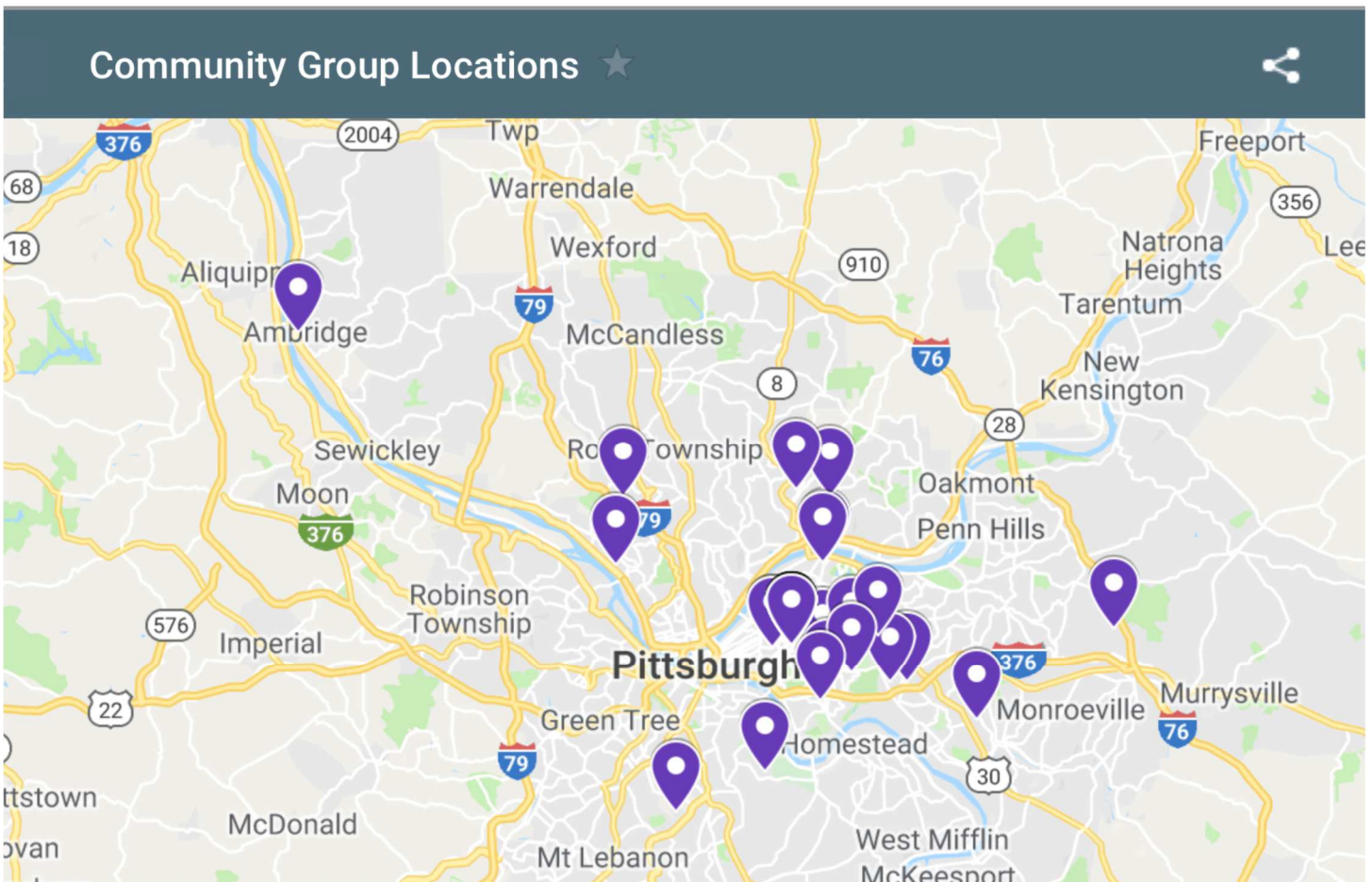
Bethany:

Right now I could use prayer that I would grow deeper and deeper in my relationship with God and would just feel His love. Also, prayer for God's blessing on the rest of the school year and on my summer internship at Smucker would be great!

Community Groups

Did you know that Ascension has 28 Community Groups in various locations throughout the city?

Visit our website at www.ascensionpittsburgh.org to find out more. Or if you would like to talk to a staff member about where best to connect, email our Associate Rector, Jonathan Warren, at jonathan.warren@ascensionpittsburgh.org.





Dan Dupee, author of *It's Not Too Late*, and chairman of the board of the Coalition for Christian Outreach is joining us for dinner and will be our guest speaker.

When: Saturday May 4th, 6:30-8pm

Where: Ascension's Parish Hall

Cost: \$10 per plate. Cash or Check

Childcare: Kids eat with us ... then head to the Hunt Rooms from 7-8pm.

What kind of food do we need to help us run with perseverance the race set out before us? That is the question that around 40,000 runners will be asking on Saturday May 4th, as they anticipate Sunday's big race, the annual Pittsburgh Marathon.

What kind of community will help us Christians run with perseverance the race set out before us? That is the question we will be asking over dinner in the Parish Hall on Saturday May 4th, after our 5pm Saturday service of Holy Eucharist.

What is the role of parents, friends, family, youth group, college ministries and the wider church body? And what can we do to help our young people in those particularly challenging parts of the Christian race; the transitions to high school, to college and beyond?

I am very thankful that Dan Dupee, author of *It's Not Too Late*, and chairman of the board of the Coalition for Christian Outreach is joining us for dinner and will be our guest speaker. I am also very thankful for those graduating out of middle school, and graduating out of high school, who also are preparing to present!

This dinner is also a fundraiser for Ascension's youth, college and young adult ministries. Established last year, our **'Going the Distance'** fund resources initiatives that support our youth through these transitions. For example, this year we have been enjoying a monthly 'senior church tour'. Leah Hornfeck and I have been taking our high school seniors to a different local church once a month, to enjoy a range of worship services before discussing our experiences over lunch. Our hope is that those who then leave Pittsburgh for their studies or jobs are more confident and competent at finding, visiting and getting connected at a new church. Money from the GTD fund pays for lunch!

So please join us in the Parish Hall after the Saturday May 4th service of Holy Communion for a delicious lasagna dinner! We will be providing all the food (no need to send in Lasagna this year) but we welcome your donations.

Children's Ministry

We have an amazing team of volunteers who lead our children's Sunday school classes! Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me" (Mt 19:14). Kids meet Jesus in Sunday School! When I ask volunteers what they like about Sunday School, they say "I've learned new things about the Bible" or "It is such a joy to see children deepening their relationship with God." Would you like to be a part of this? Want to share a Bible story with children and invite them to respond? Our greatest need is for adults who could serve with our PreK or Elementary age Godly Play classes during the 9am service. We can train you! Godly Play is a hands-on experiential curriculum that invites children to encounter Jesus each week. Talk to Matt Ulrich, Children's Director!

Palm Sunday at 9am or 11am

On Palm Sunday childcare is available for those 4 and under in rooms 101 and 102.

PARENTS PLEASE NOTE:

If you would like your younger children to join with you in the palm processional around the church, please take them to childcare after the processional is complete. Children 5 and older are with their parents for the service. There are coloring sheets specifically for Palm Sunday located at the back of the church.

Maundy Thursday at 7pm



This year Fr. Jack Gabig will be leading the kids in a Seder meal. A Seder meal is a ceremonial experience where the kids will reenact the biblical Passover story in light of the Gospel. Childcare for those 4 and under will be in room 102.

Good Friday from Noon – 3pm

Children's programming for those in K – 5th grade will be in the Hunt Rooms. The Elementary program will be centered around Holy Week and Easter themes. Like the adult programming, the children's program will be structured in 1 hour segments and children are

welcome to stay for all or part of the time. Parents must drop off and pick up their children. Child-care for those 4 and under will be in room 102.



EASTER SUNDAY

6am Easter Vigil - No childcare

9am and 11am service

Childcare for those 4 and under in rooms 101 and 102; children 5 and older are with their parents for the service. There are coloring sheets for Easter Sunday located at the back of the church.

For more information:

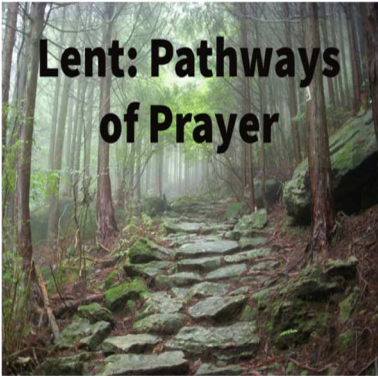
Director of Children's Ministry, Matt Ulrich
matt.ulrich@ascensionpittsburgh.org



Easter Egg Hunt We will have an Easter Egg Hunt in the Ed Wing and Courtyard (weather permitting) following both services. Meet in the Hunt Rooms right after worship! Please join us and bring baskets!

For Your Calendar

Pathways of Prayer Series



Friday, April 5 from 7 – 8:30pm

This 4th week of our workshop series on prayer will include:

Workshop 1: Praying with Icons (Jonathan Warren and Becca Chapman)

Workshop 2: Praying with your body (Joanne and Doug Spence)

Fish Fry in the Parish Hall and final Prayer Workshop

Friday, April 12 from 6:30 – 8:30pm

Join us for a Fish Fry (Baked fish will also be available...) in the Parish Hall followed by the *Pathways of Prayer Series: Singing our Prayers*. There will be a \$5/ adult and \$3/child charge for the Fish Fry with a \$20 family cap.

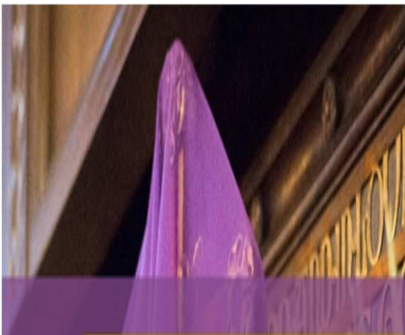
The Drama of Scripture

Saturday, April 13 at 9:30 – 11am in the Hunt Rooms

In the first half of 2019, we are exploring our Christian story by reading together Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen's *The Drama of Scripture*. Jonathan Warren, our Associate Rector, is teaching several sessions between January and June on the narrative arc of Scripture, corresponding to the six 'acts' of the drama of redemption that Bartholomew and Goheen highlight. If you haven't come to the first couple sessions, it is OK to join the class now.



Four Classes to better understand the 'Anglican Way'



These Wednesday classes will be held from 6:30 – 8:30pm with childcare provided. The classes are open to all and will be taught by Associate Rector, Jonathan Warren. Folks are welcome to pick a class that interests them. The 4 classes are compulsory for any who wish to be confirmed at Ascension. For an article on Ascension's confirmation process, see the February Ascent, available at www.ascensionpittsburgh.org.

May 8: Understanding Anglicanism (Part I)

This class will outline the nature of confirmation in the Anglican church and will do a quick run through of Anglican history from Jesus to the formation of the Anglican Church in North America

May 15: Understanding Anglicanism (Part II)

We will take a closer look at the Prayer Book and Sacraments of the Anglican Church. The class will include an Instructed Eucharist.

May 22: Understanding Ascension

(Part I): The Local Church and You

This class will look at Ascension's Ethos - Evangelical, Catholic, Reformed, Charismatic, Hospitable. We will also examine Ascension Ministries and Community Groups and offer participants a Spiritual Gifts inventory.

May 28: Understanding Ascension

(Part II): The Local Church and You

We will examine how we honor God in our Vocations and will also examine a Spirituality of Everyday Life.

Explore
Anglicanism





Marathon Weekend: Saturday Worship on 5/4 at 5

On the weekend of the Pittsburgh Marathon we cancel all Sunday services and gather for worship at 5pm on Saturday instead. Please plan to join us then and enjoy supporting the City of Pittsburgh on Marathon Sunday!

After our Saturday worship service, the youth are hosting a Lasagna Dinner fundraiser. Plan to come and 'carb up' prior to the race. The money raised will go toward a new 'Going the Distance' Fund. This fund will resource a range of initiatives that support youth and emerging adults through the faith-challenging transitions of school, college and beyond. Come to the dinner to find out more!

Are you running the race? Running for a non-profit?

If you are running the marathon (full marathon, half marathon, relay), we'd love for you to come up for prayer at the time of the Peace on May 4th. We'll pray for you and any non-profits you may be running in support of.

Marathon Overnight

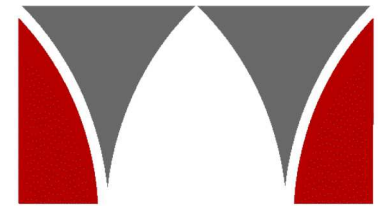
After dinner many from the middle and high school youth groups will stay for evening programming, before 'sleeping' overnight at church and waking bright and early to serve at an official Marathon Fluid Station outside WQED, distributing water and Gatorade to the passing runners.

Lasagna Dinner Youth Fundraiser

Plan to come!

Plan to bring a check!

Plan on great table conversation!



CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

A Worshipping Community;
Equipping God's People;
Sharing Christ's Healing With a Broken World

Worship Services Sunday

9:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist

11:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist

Wednesday

Noon

Holy Eucharist

in the Gordon Chapel

Address

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Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Phone: 412-621-4361

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www.ascensionpittsburgh.org

The Ascent

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Ascent Deadline

Articles for the May Ascent are due April 13 and will be available April 28.